

## *Martin Heidegger: Political Texts, 1933-1934\**

### Schlageter\*\* May 26, 1933

In the midst of our work, during a short break in our lectures, let us remember the Freiburg student, Albert Leo *Schlageter*, a young German hero who a decade ago died the *most difficult* and the *greatest* death of all.

Let us honor him by reflecting, for a moment, upon his death in order that this death may help us to understand our lives.

Schlageter died the *most difficult* of all deaths. Not in the front line as the leader of his field artillery battery, not in the tumult of an attack, and not in a grim defensive action — no, he stood *defenseless* before the French rifles.

But he stood and bore the most difficult thing a man can bear.

Yet even this could have been borne with a final rush of jubilation, had a victory been won and the greatness of the awakening nation shone forth.

Instead — darkness, humiliation, and betrayal.

And so, in his most difficult hour, he had also to achieve *the greatest thing of which man is capable*. Alone, drawing on his own inner strength, he had to place before his soul an image of the future awakening of the *Volk* to honor and greatness so that he could die believing in this future.

Whence this *hardness of will*, which allowed him to endure the most difficult thing of all?

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\*The German original of these texts can be found in Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger* (Bern: 1962).

\*\*Albert Leo Schlageter, a former student at Freiburg University, was shot for acts of sabotage against the French occupation army in the Ruhr on May 26, 1923. Subsequently, he was elevated to the status of a great Nazi martyr and hero.

Whence this *clarity of heart*, which allowed him to envision what was greatest and most remote?

Student of Freiburg! German student! When on your hikes and outings you set foot in the mountains, forests, and valleys of the Black Forest, the home of this hero, experience this and know: The mountains among which the young farmer's son grew up are of primitive stone, of granite. They have long been at work hardening the will.

The autumn sun of the Black Forest bathes the mountain ranges and forests in the most glorious clear light. It has long nourished clarity of the heart.

As he stood defenseless facing the rifles, the hero's inner gaze soared above the muzzles to the daylight and mountains of his home that he might die for the German people and its Reich with the Alemannic countryside before his eyes.

With a hard will and a clear heart, Albert Leo Schlageter died his death, the most difficult and the greatest of all.

Student of Freiburg, let the strength of this hero's native mountains flow into your will!

Student of Freiburg, let the strength of the autumn sun of this hero's native valley shine into your heart! Preserve both within you and carry them, hardness of will and clarity of heart, to your comrades at the German universities.

Schlageter walked these grounds as a student. But Freiburg could not hold him for long. He *was compelled* to go to the Baltic; he *was compelled* to go to Upper Silesia; he *was compelled* to go to the Ruhr.

He was not permitted to escape his destiny so that he could die the most difficult and greatest of all deaths with a hard will and a clear heart. We honor the hero and raise our arms in silent greeting.

## Labor Service and the University\*

### June 20, 1933

In the future, the *school* will no longer enjoy its exclusive position in education. With the *Labor Service*, there has arisen a new and decisive force for education (*Erziehungsmacht*). The *work camp* is now taking its place alongside home, youth league, military service, and school.

A new institution for the direct revelation of the *Volksgemeinschaft* is being realized in the work camp. In the future, young Germans will be governed by the knowledge of *labor*, in which the *Volk* concentrates its strength in order to experience the hardness of its existence, to preserve the momentum of its will, and to learn anew the value of its manifold abilities. The work camp is at the same time a camp for training leaders in all social groups (*Stände*) and professions. For what counts in the camp is exemplary acting and working together, but not standing by and supervising. And least of all capable of grasping the new reality of the work camp are those who visit such a camp one time as “sightseers.”

Not only does the work camp awaken and educate to the knowledge of the laboring community of all social groups (*die arbeitende Gemeinschaft aller Stände*), but in the future, this knowledge, rooted in the souls of young Germans, will also have a purifying effect on the *school* and will legislate what it can and cannot, and should and should not, do.

At the same time, as an educational institution in its own right, the work camp is becoming a new source of those energies through which all other educational institutions — especially the school — are being

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\*Appeared in the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*. This organ, in which many of Heidegger's political tracts and speeches from the early 1930s appeared, was published by the Freiburg Student Association, which had been thoroughly *gleichgeschaltet*, and had become the official Nazi student organization.

In his inaugural address as rector at Freiburg University (held on May 27, 1933, and often referred to simply as the “*Rektoratsrede*”) Heidegger refers to three types of “service” that should be rendered by students to the State: “labor service” (which, significantly, Heidegger lists first), along with “military service,” and (lastly) “service in knowledge.” To understand the frequent allusions to “labor service” in Heidegger's speeches (see also the penultimate speech printed below, “The Call to Labor Service”), it is important to realize that in the early stages of National Socialism, “labor camps” were deemed important vehicles for the levelling of differences between various social classes (*Stände*) resulting in the creation of a homogeneous and seamless *Volksgemeinschaft*.

forced to decide where they stand (*zur Entscheidung gezwungen*) and are being transformed.

Our university is surrounded in the immediate vicinity by work camps that are co-supervised by teachers from this school.

A new reality is present in the work camp. This reality serves as a symbol for the fact that our university is opening itself to the new force for education embodied in the Labor Service. Camp and school are resolved to bring together, in reciprocal give and take, the educational forces of our *Volk* into that new rooted unity from which the *Volk* in its State will commit itself to act in accordance with its destiny.

Heidegger

## The University in the New Reich\*

### June 30, 1933

We have the new Reich and the university that is to receive its tasks from the Reich's will to existence. There is revolution in Germany, and we must ask ourselves: *Is there revolution at the university as well?* No. The battle still consists of skirmishes. So far, a breakthrough has only been achieved on one front: because new life is being educated (*durch die Bildung neuen Lebens*) in the work camp and educational association (*Erziehungsverband*) as well as at the university, the latter *has been relieved of educational tasks* to which it has till now believed it had an exclusive right.

The possibility could exist that the university will suffer death through oblivion and forfeit the last vestige of its educational power. It

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\*A speech given by Heidegger as part of a series of political lectures organized by the Heidelberg Student Association. It appeared originally in *Heidelberger Neueste Nachrichten*, July 1, 1933. It is of interest to note that in Heidegger's two post festum justifications of his activities under the National Socialist regime (for references, see R. Wolin, "The French Heidegger Debate," note 4, in this issue of *New German Critique*), Heidegger always claims that he accepted the position of university rector only in order to prevent the rampant politicization of university life. However, in "The University in the New Reich" (as well as in the opening paragraph of the previous address, "Labor Service"), it is very clear that Heidegger set little store by "academic freedom" in the traditional sense. Instead, as the following speech indicates, his program held that the university must be "integrated again into the the *Volksgemeinschaft* and be joined together with the State . . . in the National Socialist spirit."

must, however, be *integrated again into the Volksgemeinschaft* and be *joined together with the State*. The university must again become an educational force that draws on knowledge to educate the State's leaders to knowledge. This goal demands three things: 1. knowledge of today's university; 2. knowledge of the dangers today holds for the future; 3. new courage.

Up to now, *research and teaching* have been carried on at the universities as they were for decades. Teaching was supposed to develop out of research, and one sought to find a pleasant balance between the two. It was always only the point of view of the teacher that spoke out of this notion. No one had concerned himself with the university as community. Research *got out of hand* and concealed its uncertainty behind the idea of international scientific and scholarly progress. Teaching that had become aimless hid behind examination requirements.

A *fierce battle* must be fought against this situation in the National Socialist spirit, and this spirit cannot be allowed to be suffocated by humanizing, Christian ideas that suppress its unconditionality. Nor is it enough to desire to take the new situation (*dem Neuen*) into account by painting everything with a touch of political color. Of great *danger* are the *noncommittal plans and slogans* that are turning up everywhere; and so, too, is the "*new*" concept of *Wissenschaft*, which is nothing more than the old one with a slight anthropological underpinning. All of the talk about "politics" is nonsense as well, for it does nothing to put an end to the old routine way of doing and thinking about things (*dem alten Schlendrian*). What the real gravity of the new situation (*des Neuen*) calls for is the experience of affliction (*Not*), is the active engagement with real conditions (*die zugreifende Auseinandersetzung mit den wirklichen Zuständen*). Only that activity is justified that is performed with full inner commitment to the future. The warning cry has already been sounded: "*Wissenschaft* is endangered by the amount of time lost in martial sports and other such activities." But what does that mean, to lose time, when it is a question of fighting for the State! *Danger* comes not from *work for the State*. It comes only from indifference and resistance. For that reason, only true strength should have access to the right path, but not half-heartedness.

*New courage* allows these dangers to be seen clearly. Only it alone opens our eyes to that which is to come and which is now emerging. It forces each teacher and pupil to *make up his mind about the fundamental questions of Wissenschaft*, and this decision is of epochal importance, for

on it depends whether we Germans shall remain a people that is, in the highest sense of the word, knowing. The new teaching which is at issue here does not mean conveying knowledge, but allowing students to learn and inducing them to learn. This means allowing oneself to be beset by the unknown and then becoming master of it in comprehending knowing; it means becoming secure in one's sense for what is essential. It is from such teaching that true research emerges, interlocked with the whole through its rootedness in the *Volk* and its bond to the State. The student is forced out into the uncertainty of all things, in which the necessity of engagement (*Einsatz*) is grounded. *University study must again become a risk (Wagnis)*, not a refuge for the cowardly. Whoever does not survive the battle, lies where he falls. The new courage must accustom itself to steadfastness, for the battle for the institutions where our leaders are educated will continue for a long time. It will be fought out of the strengths of the new Reich that Chancellor Hitler will bring to reality. A hard race (*Geschlecht*) with no thought of self must fight this battle, a race that lives from constant testing and that remains directed towards the goal to which it has committed itself. It is a battle to determine who shall be the *teachers* and *leaders* at the university (*ein Kampf um die Gestalt des Lehrers und des Führers an der Universität*).

## German Students\* November 3, 1933

The National Socialist revolution is bringing about the total transformation of our German existence (*Dasein*).

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\*An appeal launched by Heidegger on the occasion of the plebiscite of November 12, 1933 called by Hitler to sanction (ex post facto) Germany's withdrawal from the League of Nations, published in the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*. Joachim Fest has referred to this plebiscite as "one of [Hitler's] most effective chess moves in the process of consolidating his power within Germany" (Joachim C. Fest, *Hitler*, trans., Richard and Clara Winston [New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1974] 439). Fest continues: "Since Hitler had intertwined his policies as a whole with the resolution to withdraw from the league by framing his plebiscite question in general terms, there was no way for the voter to express approval of his position on the League of Nations and at

In these events, it is up to you to remain the ones who always urge on and who are always ready, the ones who never yield and who always grow.

Your will to know seeks to experience what is essential, simple, and great.

You crave to be exposed to that which besets you most directly and to that which imposes upon you the most wide-ranging obligations.

Be hard and genuine in your demands.

Remain clear and sure in your rejection.

Do not pervert the knowledge you have struggled for into a vain, selfish possession. Preserve it as the necessary primal possession of the leader (*föhrerischen Menschen*) in the *völkisch* professions of the State. You can no longer be those who merely attend lectures (*die nur "Hörenden"*). You are obligated to know and act together in the creation of the future university (*hohe Schule*) of the German spirit. Every one of you must first prove and justify each talent and privilege. That will occur through the force of your aggressive involvement (*Einsatz*) in the struggle of the entire *Volk* for itself.

Let your loyalty and your will to follow (*Gefolgschaftswille*) be strengthened daily and hourly. Let your courage grow without ceasing so that you will be able to make the sacrifices necessary to save the essence of our *Volk* and to elevate its innermost strength in the State.

Let not propositions and "ideas" be the rules of your Being (*Sein*).

The Führer alone is the present and future German reality and its law. Learn to know ever more deeply: from now on every single thing demands decision, and every action responsibility.

Heil Hitler!

Martin Heidegger, Rector

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the same time condemn his domestic policies." Heidegger bought the Party line on this question part and parcel, as is illustrated by his remark below, in "German Men and Women," that "There are not separate foreign and domestic policies." In other words, one should not quibble over individual aspects of the National Revolution. Either one accepts it as a whole, or one does not accept it at all. And thus, the November 12 plebiscite, though nominally concerned with a question of "foreign policy," must be treated as a confirmation of the Revolution in general.

## German Men and Women\*

### November 10, 1933

The German people has been summoned by the Führer to vote; the Führer, however, is asking nothing from the people. Rather, he is *giving* the people the possibility of making, directly, the highest free decision of all: whether it — the entire people — wants its own existence (*Dasein*) or whether it does *not* want it.

This election simply cannot be compared to all other previous elections. What is unique about this election is the simple greatness of the decision that is to be executed. The inexorability of what is simple and ultimate (*des Einfachen und Letzten*), however, tolerates no vacillation and no hesitation. This ultimate decision reaches to the outermost limit of our people's existence. And what is this limit? It consists in the most basic demand of all Being (*Sein*), that it preserve and save its own essence. A barrier is thereby erected between what can be reasonably expected of a people and what cannot. It is by virtue of this basic law of honor that a people preserves the dignity and resoluteness of its essence.

It is not ambition, not desire for glory, not blind obstinacy, and not hunger for power that demands from the Führer that Germany withdraw from the League of Nations. It is only the clear will to unconditional self-responsibility in enduring and mastering the fate of our people.

That is *not* a turning away from the community of nations. On the contrary — with this step, our people is submitting to that essential law of human existence to which every people must first give allegiance if it is still to be a people. It is only out of the parallel observance by all peoples of this unconditional demand of self-responsibility that there emerges the possibility of taking one another seriously so that a community can be affirmed.

The will to a true community of nations (*Völkergemeinschaft*) is equally far removed both from an unrestrained, vague desire for world brotherhood and from blind tyranny. Existing beyond this opposition, this will allows peoples and states to stand by one another in an open and manly fashion as self-reliant entities (*das offene und mannhaft*e Aufsich-und

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\* Another appeal to support the upcoming plebiscite published by Heidegger in the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*.



*Zueinanderstehen der Völker und Staaten*).

The choice that the German people will now make is — simply as an event in itself, and independent of the outcome — the strongest evidence of the new German reality embodied in the National Socialist State.

Our will to national (*völkisch*) self-responsibility desires that each people find and preserve the greatness and truth of its destiny (*Bestimmung*). This will is the highest guarantee of security among peoples; for it binds itself to the basic law of manly respect and unconditional honor.

On November 12, the German people as a whole will choose *its* future. This future is bound to the Führer. In choosing this future, the people cannot, on the basis of so-called foreign policy considerations, vote *Yes* without also including in this *Yes* the Führer and the political movement that has pledged itself unconditionally to him. There are not separate foreign and domestic policies. There is only the one will to the full existence (*Dasein*) of the State.

The Führer has awakened this will in the entire people and has welded it into a single resolve.

No one can remain away from the polls on the day when this will is manifested.

Heidegger  
Rector

(Declaration of Support for Adolf Hitler  
and the National Socialist State)\*  
November 11, 1933

German teachers and comrades!

German *Volksgenossen* and *Volksgenossinnen*!

The German people has been summoned by the Führer to vote; the Führer, however, is asking nothing from the people. Rather, he is giving the people the possibility of making, directly, the highest free decision

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\*Address presented by Heidegger at an election rally held by German university professors in Leipzig in support of the upcoming plebiscite.

of all: whether the entire people wants its own existence (*Dasein*) or whether it does *not* want it.

Tomorrow the people will choose nothing less than its future.

This election remains absolutely incomparable with all previous elections. What is unique about this election is the simple greatness of the decision that is to be executed. The inexorability of what is simple and ultimate (*des Einfachen und Letzten*) tolerates no vacillation and no hesitation. This ultimate decision reaches to the outermost limit of our people's existence. And what is this limit? It consists in the most basic demand of all Being (*Sein*), that it keep and save its own essence. A barrier is thereby erected between what can be reasonably expected of a people and what cannot. It is by virtue of this basic law of honor that the German people retains the dignity and resoluteness of its life. However, the will to self-responsibility is not only the basic law of our people's existence; it is also the fundamental event in the bringing about of the people's National Socialist State. From this will to self-responsibility, every effort, be it humble or grand, of each social and occupational group (*Stand*) assumes its necessary and predestined place in the social order (*in den Standort und Rang ihrer gleich notwendigen Bestimmung*). The labor of the various groups (*Stände*) supports and strengthens the living framework of the State; labor reconquers for the people its rootedness; labor places the State, as the reality of the people, into the field of action of all essential forces of human Being.

It is not ambition, not desire for glory, not blind obstinacy, and not hunger for power that demands from the Führer that Germany withdraw from the League of Nations. It is only the clear will to unconditional self-responsibility in suffering and mastering the fate of our people. That is *not* a turning away from the community of peoples. On the contrary: with this step, our people is submitting to that essential law of human Being to which every people must first give allegiance if it is still to be a people.

It is only out of the parallel observance by all peoples of this unconditional demand of self-responsibility that there emerges the possibility of taking each other seriously so that a community can also be affirmed. The will to a true national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) is equally far removed both from an unrestrained, vague desire for world brotherhood and from blind tyranny. Existing beyond this opposition, this will allows peoples and states to stand by one another in an open and manly fashion as self-reliant entities (*das offene und mannhaft* *Aufsich-*

*und Zueinanderstehen der Völker und Staaten*). What is it that such a will brings about? Is it reversion into barbarism? No! It is the averting of all empty negotiation and hidden deal-making through the simple, great demand of self-responsible action. Is it the eruption of lawlessness? No! It is the clear acknowledgement of each people's inviolable independence. Is it the denial of the creative genius of a spiritual (*geistig*) people and the smashing of its historical traditions? No! It is the awakening of the young who have been purified and are growing back to their roots. Their will to the State will make this people hard towards itself and reverent towards each genuine deed.

What sort of event is this then? The nation is winning back the *truth* of its will to existence, for truth is the revelation of that which makes a people confident, lucid, and strong in its actions and knowledge. The genuine will to know arises from such truth. And this will to know circumscribes the right to know. And from there, finally, the limits are measured out within which genuine questioning and research must legitimize and prove themselves. Such is the origin of *Wissenschaft*, which is constrained by the necessity of self-responsible *völkisch* existence. *Wissenschaft* is thus the passion to educate that has been restrained by this necessity, the passion to want to know in order to make knowing. *To be* knowing, however, means: to be master of things in clarity and to be resolved to action.

We have declared our independence from the idol of thought that is without foundation and power. We see the end of the philosophy that serves such thought. We are certain that the clear hardness and the sure, steady competence (*werkgerechte Sicherheit*) of unyielding, simple questioning about the essence of Being are returning. For a *völkische Wissenschaft*, the courage either to grow or to be destroyed in confrontation with what is (*dem Seienden*), which is the first form of courage, is the innermost motive for questioning. For courage lures one forward; courage frees itself from what has been up to now; courage risks the unaccustomed and the incalculable. For us, questioning is not the unconstrained play of curiosity. Nor is questioning the stubborn insistence on doubt at any price. For us, questioning means: exposing oneself to the sublimity of things and their laws; it means: not closing oneself off to the terror of the untamed and to the confusion of darkness. To be sure, it is for the sake of this questioning that we question, and *not* to serve those who have grown tired and their complacent yearning for comfortable answers. We know: the courage to question, to experience

the abysses of existence and to endure the abysses of existence, is in itself already a *higher* answer than any of the all-too-cheap answers afforded by artificial systems of thought.

And so we, to whom the preservation of our people's will to know shall in the future be entrusted, declare: The National Socialist revolution is not merely the assumption of power as it exists presently in the State by another party, a party grown sufficiently large in numbers to be able to do so. Rather, this revolution is bringing about *the total transformation of our German existence (Dasein)*. From now, on each and every thing demands decision, and every deed demands responsibility. Of this we are certain: If the will to self-responsibility becomes the law that governs the coexistence of nations, then each people can and must be the master who instructs every other people in the richness and strength of all the great deeds and works of human Being (*Sein*).

The choice that the German people must now make is, *simply as an event in itself*, quite independent of the outcome, the strongest expression of the new German reality embodied in the National Socialist State. Our will to national (*völkisch*) self-responsibility desires that each people find and preserve the greatness and truth of its destiny (*Bestimmung*). This will is the highest guarantee of peace among nations, for it binds itself to the basic law of manly respect and unconditional honor. The Führer has awakened this will in the entire people and has welded it into *one* single resolve. No one can remain away from the polls on the day when this will is manifested. Heil Hitler!

## A Word from the University\*

### (For the Jubilee of the *Freiburger Zeitung*)

### January 6, 1934

This retrospective look at its own history obligates the *Freiburger Zeitung* to commit itself to the future. The more directly the individual

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\* An article written by Heidegger on the occasion of the sesquicentennial of the *Freiburger Zeitung*.

states that existed previously are absorbed by the new National Socialist State, the more resolutely the ethnic-cultural character (*das Volkstum*) of each *Gau* must be awakened and preserved in its original form; for only then will the entire *Volk* be able to develop its manifold strengths for creating a state. It was in order to realize this task that German education brought its work in line with the National Socialist political will (*Staatswille*). The university is becoming the highest political school for the people of the region where it is located. This newspaper, however, which is limited and bound to the concerns and traditions of the Alemannic people, must not merely print the occasional report on school celebrations or faculty appointments. It must transform the educational work of the school into public state-mindedness in the village and, in the city, into a political existence that remains bound to the rural areas.

Heidegger

Rector of the University of Freiburg

## The Call to the Labor Service\*

### January 23, 1934

The new educational path of our German young men (*Jungmannschaft*) leads through the Labor Service.

Such service provides the basic experience of hardness, of closeness to the soil and to the implements of labor, of the rigorous law that governs the simplest physical — and thus essential — labor in a group.

Such service provides the basic experience of daily existence in a camp community, an existence strictly ordered according to the requirements of the tasks that the group has undertaken.

Such service provides the basic experience of having put daily to the test (*auf die Probe und in die Entscheidung gestellt*), and thus clarified and reinforced, one's sense of social origin (*der ständischen Herkunft*) and of the responsibility that derives for the individual from the fact that all belong

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\*Article written by Heidegger for the *Freiburger Studentenzeitung*.

together in an ethnic-cultural (*volkhaft*) unity.

Such service provides the basic experience of the origin of true comradeship. True comradeship only arises under the pressure of a great common danger or from the ever-growing commitment to a clearly perceived task; it has nothing to do with the effusive exchange of psychological (*seelisch*) inhibitions by individuals who have agreed to sleep, eat, and sing under one roof.

Such service provides the basic experience of those things which will allow the individual to be able to truly take stock of himself, and it takes the final decision in the choice of a profession out of the realm of the private bourgeois calculation of prospects according to the principle of "appropriateness to one's social standing."

We must think beyond the immediate effects of Labor Service, which are already apparent, and learn to comprehend the fact that here, with the German young people who are now taking their place in society, a complete transformation of German existence (*Dasein*) is being made ready. Within the German university, a new basic attitude towards scholarly and scientific work (*wissenschaftliche Arbeit*) will slowly develop. And as this happens, that notion of the "intellect" (*Geist*) and of "intellectual work" (*geistige Arbeit*) will completely disappear in terms of which the "educated" person has up to now defined his life and which even now his envoys want to salvage for a separate estate (*Stand*) of "intellectual producers." Only then will we learn that, *as work*, all work is *spiritual* (*geistig*). Animals and all beings that merely exist cannot work. They lack the basic experience that work requires: the decisive commitment to a task, the capacity for resoluteness and steadfastness in an assignment they have accepted. In short, they lack *freedom*, that is: *spirit* (*Geist*).

So-called "intellectual work" (*geistige Arbeit*) is not spiritual (*geistig*) because it relates to "higher spiritual things" (*höhere geistige Dinge*). It is spiritual (*geistig*) because, as work, it reaches back more deeply into the afflictions (*Not*) that are part of a people's historical existence (*Dasein*) and because it is more directly — because more knowingly — beset by the hardness and danger of human existence (*Dasein*).

There is only *one single* German "estate" ("*Lebensstand*"). That is the *estate of labor* (*Arbeitsstand*) which is rooted in and borne by the *Volk* and which has freely submitted to the historical will of the State. The character of this estate is being pre-formed in the National Socialist German *Workers' Party* movement.

A call to the Labor Service is being sounded.

Those who are lame, comfortable, and effete will “go” into the Labor Service because it will perhaps jeopardize their degree and employment prospects to stay away. Those who are strong and unbroken are proud that extreme demands are being made of them: for that is the moment when they rise up to the hardest tasks, those for which there is neither pay nor praise, but only the “reward” of sacrifice and service in the area of the innermost necessities of German Being (*deutschen Seins*).

## National Socialist Education (*Wissensschulung*)\* January 22, 1934

*German Volksgenossen! German Workers!*

As Rector of the University, I cordially welcome you to our institution. This welcome will at the same time be the beginning of our work together. Let us start by understanding clearly the significance of the fact that you, for whom the City of Freiburg has created jobs by emergency decree, are coming together with us in the largest lecture hall of the University.

What does this fact mean?

Because of novel and comprehensive employment measures on the part of the City of Freiburg, you have been given work and bread has been put on your tables. You thereby enjoy a privileged position among the rest of the City's unemployed. But this preferential treatment means at the same time an obligation.

And your duty is to understand the creation of jobs, and to accept the work for which you are paid, in the way that the Führer of our new State demands. For the creation of jobs means not only the alleviation of external need, not only the elimination of inner discouragement or, indeed, despair; the creation of jobs means not only the *warding off* of

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\*An address given by Heidegger at Freiburg University to 600 “beneficiaries” of the Nazi “labor service” program. Published in *Der Alemanne Kampfblatt der Nationalsozialisten Oberbadens*, February 1, 1934.

that which burdens. The creation of jobs is at the same time, and in its essence, an act of *building up* and construction (*Aufbau und Bau*) in the new future of our *Volk*.

The creation of work must, first of all, make the unemployed and jobless *Volksgenosse* again *capable of existing* (*daseinsfähig*) in the State and for the State and thereby capable of existing for the *Volk* as a whole. The *Volksgenosse* who has found work should learn thereby that he has not been cast aside and abandoned, that he has an ordered place in the *Volk*, and that every service and every accomplishment possesses its own value that is fungible by other services and accomplishments. Having experienced this, he should win back proper dignity and self-confidence *in his own eyes* and acquire proper self-assurance and resoluteness *in the eyes of the other Volksgenossen*.

The goal is: to become strong for a fully valid existence as a *Volksgenosse* in the German *Volksgemeinschaft*.

For this, however, it is necessary:

to know where one's place in the *Volk* is,

to know how the *Volk* is organized and how it renews itself in this organization,

to know what is happening with the German *Volk* in the National Socialist State.

to know in what a bitter struggle this new reality was won and created,

to know what the future recovery of the body of the *Volk* (*Volkskörper*) means and what it demands of each individual,

to know to what point urbanization has brought the Germans, how they should be returned to the soil and the country through resettlement,

to know what is entailed in the fact that 18 million Germans belong to the *Volk* but, because they are living outside the borders of the Reich, do not yet belong to the Reich.

Everyone of our *Volk* who is employed must *know for what reason and to what purpose* he is where he is. It is only through this living and ever-present *knowledge* that his life will be rooted in the *Volk* as a whole, and in its destiny. *Providing this knowledge is thus a necessary part of the creation of work*; and it is your right, but therefore also your obligation, to demand this knowledge and to endeavor to acquire it.

And now, your younger comrades from the *university* stand ready to help you acquire this knowledge. They are resolved to help that knowledge



to become alive in you, to help it develop and grow strong and never again to slumber. They stand ready, not as “intellectuals” (“*Gschtudierten*”) from the class of your “betters,” but as *Volksgenossen* who have recognized their duty.

They stand ready, not as the “educated” vis-à-vis a class — indeed, a “lower class” — of *uneducated* individuals, but as comrades. They are prepared to listen to your questions, your problems, your difficulties, and your doubts, to think through them with you, and, in shared effort, to bring them to a clear and decisive resolution. What, therefore, is the significance of the fact that you are assembled here in the auditorium of the University with us?

This fact is a sign that a new, common will exists, the will to build a *living bridge* between the worker of the “hand” and the worker of the “head.” Today, the will to bridge this gap is no longer a project that is doomed to failure. And why not? Because the whole of our German reality has been changed by the National Socialist State, with the result that our whole past way of understanding and thinking must also become different.

What we thought up to now when we used the words “knowledge” and “*Wissenschaft*” has taken on another significance.

What we meant up to now with the words “worker” and “work” has acquired another meaning.

“*Wissenschaft*” is not the possession of a privileged class of citizens, to be used as a weapon in the exploitation of the working people. Rather, *Wissenschaft* is merely the *more rigorous* and hence *more responsible* form of that knowledge which the entire German *Volk* must seek and demand for its own historical existence as a state (*sein eigenes geschichtlich-staatliches Dasein*) if it still wants to secure its continued existence and greatness and to preserve them in the future. In its essence, the knowledge of true *Wissenschaft* does *not* differ *at all* from the knowledge of the farmer, the woodcutter, the miner, the artisan. For knowledge means: *to know one’s way around* in the world into which we are placed, as a community and as individuals.

Knowledge means: in our decisions and actions *to be up* to the task that is assigned us, whether this task be to till the soil or to fell a tree or to dig a ditch or to inquire into the laws of Nature or to illumine the fate-like force of History.

Knowledge means: to be *master* of the situation into which we are placed.

What is decisive is not so much how varied our knowledge is and what quantity of things we know, but whether our knowledge has grown naturally out of and is directed towards our circle of existence (*ein ursprünglich gewachsenes und auf unseren Daseinskreis ausgerichtetes*) and whether, through our deeds and in our behavior, we take responsibility for what we know. We no longer distinguish between the “educated” and the “uneducated.” — And not because these are both the same, but because we no longer tie our estimation of a person to this distinction. We do, on the other hand, differentiate between *genuine knowledge* and *pseudo-knowledge*. Genuine knowledge is something that both the farmer and the manual laborer have, each in his own way and in his own field of work, just as the scholar has it in his field. And, on the other hand, for all his learning, the scholar can in fact simply be wasting his time in the idle pursuit of pseudo-knowledge.

If you are to become *ones who know* here, then that does not mean that you will be served up scraps of some “general education,” as a charitable afterthought. Rather: *that knowledge* shall be awakened in you *by means of which you* — each in his respective class and work group — *can be clear and resolute Germans*.

Knowledge and the possession of knowledge, as National Socialism understands these words, does not divide into classes, but binds and unites *Volksgenossen* and social and occupational groups (*Stände*) in the one great will of the State.

Like these words “knowledge” and “*Wissenschaft*,” the words “worker” and “work,” too, have a transformed meaning and a new sound. The “worker” is not, as Marxism claimed, a mere object of exploitation. The workers (*Arbeiterstand*) are not the class of the disinherited who are rallying for the general class struggle. But labor is also not simply the production of goods for others. Nor is labor simply the occasion and the means to earn a living. Rather:

*For us, “work” is the title of every well-ordered action that is borne by the responsibility of the individual, the group, and the State and which is thus of service to the Volk.*

Work only exists where man’s determination and perseverance are freely engaged in the assertion of will and the accomplishment of a task; *but there it exists everywhere*. Therefore, all work is, *as work*, something spiritual (*Geistiges*), for it is founded in the free exercise of expert knowledge and in the competent understanding of one’s task; that is: It is founded in authentic knowledge (*eigentliches Wissen*). The accomplishment of a

miner is basically no less spiritual than the activity of a scholar.

Worker and work, as National Socialism understands these words, does not divide into classes, but binds and unites *Volksgenossen* and the social and occupational groups into the one great will of the State.

“Workers” and “academics” (*die “wissenschaftlich Wissenden”*) are not opposites. Every worker is, in his own way, one who knows; and only as one who knows is he able to work at all. The privilege of work is denied the animal. And conversely: Every person who acts knowingly and who makes decisions in and on the basis of *Wissenschaft* (*wissenschaftlich Entscheidender*) is a worker.

For this reason, neither for you nor for us can the will to build a living bridge remain any longer an empty, hopeless wish. This will, *to consummate the creation of jobs by providing the right kind of knowledge*, this will must be our innermost certainty and never faltering faith. For in what this will wills, we are only following the towering will of our Führer. To be his loyal followers means: to will that the German people shall again find, as a people of labor, its organic unity, its simple dignity, and its true strength; and that, as a state of labor, it shall secure for itself permanence and greatness.

To the man of this unprecedented will, to our Führer *Adolf Hitler* — a threefold “Sieg Heil!”

—*Translated by William S. Lewis*